

## SECTION III: ACTION PLANS



*Figure 25. San Miguel Island (James B. Frederickson)*

# ACTION PLANS - BACKGROUND

## *What Are Action Plans?*

Action plans are the means by which a sanctuary identifies and organizes the wide variety of management tools it employs to manage and protect its marine resources. Action plans allow the Sanctuary to clearly articulate the programs, projects, and regulations it uses to address the resource issues identified for this management plan and to fulfill the purposes and policies of the NMSA.

The strategies and activities in each of the action plans reflect the diversity and range of projects implemented by staff representing each of the Sanctuary's functional areas:

- Resource Protection;
- Research and Monitoring;
- Education and Outreach;
- Maritime Heritage;
- Community (Sanctuary Advisory Council) and Management Planning;
- Technology Integration and Management;
- Site Operations; and
- Office Administration.

These seven functional areas are supported by staff implementing the strategies in the action plans described below. Each strategy identifies which functional areas are responsible for implementation of the corresponding management actions.

## *How Were The Action Plans Developed?*

### Identifying the Issues

The first step in the development of these action plans was the identification of a set of current resource management issues. After initial identification, the issues were refined and prioritized over many months early in the management plan review. The first phase in the issue identification process was public scoping. Scoping meetings were held in six locations around the Channel Islands region between the months of June and August, 1999. Hundreds of comments were received via letters, email, and oral testimony at public meetings in the cities of Lompoc, Oxnard, Santa Barbara, Ventura, San Luis Obispo and Long Beach (a seventh meeting was held in Washington D.C.). Comments were wide-ranging and diverse and included community concerns, specific problems, and unmet needs for the Sanctuary (for a complete listing of the comments received during scoping, see [http://channelislands.nos.noaa.gov/manplan/com\\_archive.html](http://channelislands.nos.noaa.gov/manplan/com_archive.html)).

After the scoping meetings ended, CINMS staff compiled all the comments and organized them by subject, which led to several management issue "categories":

- Water quality;
- Public awareness and knowledge of the Sanctuary;
- Research and monitoring;
- Enforcement;
- Boundary redefinition;

- Human uses (certain recreational and commercial extractive activities, military activities, vessel traffic and mooring systems, oil and gas activities);
- Marine reserves;
- Sea otter management; and
- Administrative issues, such as a need for Sanctuary performance standards, and improved inter-agency coordination.

Working from this list, CINMS staff began working with the Sanctuary Advisory Council to identify a set of priority issues for the management plan. At the January 2000 meeting of the Council, CINMS staff detailed a prioritization process they had been using in internal discussions to begin ranking the various issues. This process used various criteria, such as staffing and budget resources, jurisdictional and political feasibility, ecosystem protection needs, etc.

Based on this process, staff identified and presented to the Council a recommendation for (at least) ten priority issues to be addressed by the Sanctuary program areas in the management plan: 1) water quality; 2) military activity; 3) oil and gas activity; 4) large vessel traffic; 5) emergency response; 6) recreational and commercial uses; 7) research uses; 8) maritime heritage resource protection; 9) boundary redefinition; and 10) education and outreach.<sup>24</sup>

Over the next several Advisory Council meetings (from March 2000 to February 2001), CINMS staff reviewed and refined various aspects of these ten general issue categories with Advisory Council members by discussing important factors such as information needs and resource requirements. In addition, CINMS staff worked both internally and with NMSP headquarters staff to refine and characterize the issues. Sanctuary staff, for example, collected background information on the specific threats each of these issues posed to the Sanctuary region and its resources. As the final issue characterizations matured, CINMS and NMSP headquarters staff, in conjunction with the Advisory Council, then began considering actions (both new and existing) the Sanctuary could take to address the issues and their specific threats (for descriptions of these meetings with the Advisory Council, see the Advisory Council meeting minutes at <http://channelislands.nos.noaa.gov/sac/minutes.html>).

### ***Drafting Action Plans***

Working from the list of priority issues, and the concepts for existing and new actions to address those issues, CINMS and NMSP headquarters staff developed criteria for selecting the issues and actions to be incorporated into action plans. Staff conducted a gap analysis to determine which issues were not addressed through existing actions, and in instances where staff were addressing a given issue, they evaluated their success in doing so. Staff then considered the feasibility, available staff expertise, and appropriateness of each existing or proposed action, along with existing or potential partners for implementing each action. Actions collectively addressing particular sub-issues were then grouped into strategies within each action plan.

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<sup>24</sup> Two important issues that emerged from the scoping meetings, marine reserves and sea otters, were left off of this list for specific reasons. Marine reserves were addressed as part of a separate process from the management plan focused on establishment of the Channel Islands MPA network. The issue of sea otters was deferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who manage the animals under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act. However, issues associated with marine zoning and sea otters are described in the Resource Protection Action Plan within this management plan.

In early 2000, staff began drafting initial action plans, such as Research and Monitoring, Marine Resource Protection, Education and Outreach, and Submerged Cultural Resources.

Soon after, the NMSP began initiating a directed and comprehensive overhaul of the internal processes and criteria used for building management plans. As such, the first CINMS action plans went through numerous iterations over the next several months so they would include all of the components emerging as part of a programmatic standard for action plans.

The final set of action plans in this management plan incorporate the latest programmatic standards. They have been vetted through several internal reviews at both the Sanctuary office in Santa Barbara and the NMSP headquarters office in Silver Spring, Maryland and directly reflect the priority issues identified by the Advisory Council and the CINMS staff, many of the original scoping comments of 1999, and the resource management responsibilities and directives established by the NMSA. There are nine action plans in this management plan:

1. Public Awareness & Understanding;
2. Conservation Science;
3. Boundary Evaluation;
4. Water Quality;
5. Emergency Response & Enforcement;
6. Maritime Heritage;
7. Resource Protection;
8. Operations; and
9. Performance Evaluation.

### ***How Are Action Plans Organized?***

Each action plan is organized around three principal sections. The first section provides introductory and supporting information for the action plan. An *Overview* summarizes the action plan's purposes and needs. A *Description of The Issues* summarizes the various management issues associated with the action plan. *Addressing the Issues* identifies the management strategies and regulations<sup>25</sup> CINMS will use to address the issues.

The second section details the action plan's strategies by providing such information as a strategy *Background*, which presents a brief overview of the strategy's purpose and need and *Activity Descriptions*, which summarize the specific means by which the strategy will be implemented. For each activity listed, there is a summary description of the activity, along with information about the status of the activity, and partners involved in it. The status information includes when the activity began, or is planned to be initiated, and with what frequency it occurs. In some cases, the status may refer to years 1-5. These refer to the years following adoption of the management plan. For example, since the management plan was adopted in 2009, year 1 refers to 2009. A complete list of all strategies included in this management plan is presented below in Table 3. The partners listed for each activity provide resources to implement it, such as funding, staff time, equipment, or other resources.

The third section of each action plan consists of a summary table providing estimated annual costs for implementing each strategy. All of these costs are approximate calculations intended to provide estimates

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<sup>25</sup> Regulations are included in this section as part of the suite of management tools that CINMS uses to address the particular issues associated with the action plan. Details on any new regulations or modifications to existing regulations that were proposed as part of this management plan review are not provided in the management plan; a detailed description and full analysis can be found in Section 2.0 of the FEIS.

of the necessary costs of implementing each strategy. The availability of funds is contingent upon the federal appropriations process, which can change from year to year.

This organizational framework is the same for each action plan. This framework is applied so each action plan conveys information in the same straightforward and uncomplicated style. The reader should come away from each action plan with an understanding of two points: 1) the particular resource management issue associated with the action plan; and 2) the ways in which CINMS plans to address it.



*Figure 26. Sea star (Dan Richards)*

### ***Framework for Determining When the Sanctuary Should Develop Additional Action Plans***

The Sanctuary must be prepared to address new and emerging issues, including by developing new action plans. The Sanctuary, in consultation with the Sanctuary Advisory Council, will consider the following in order to assess and prioritize new and emerging issues:

- Does the issue pose a potential threat to CINMS resources or qualities?
- What is the rate at which the issue or potential threat is growing or emerging?
- What is the scale, complexity, intensity, duration, and geographic extent of the issue?
- Does the issue fall within the Sanctuary's mandate?
- Does the Sanctuary have the jurisdiction and/or authority to address the issue?
- What is the degree of public and Advisory Council interest in Sanctuary involvement in the issue?

Depending on the answers to these questions, the Sanctuary may opt to address the issue in question by one or more of the following means:

- Consulting with local, state, federal, or tribal agencies with a leading or shared authority for addressing the issue;
- Commenting on local or regional private sector or government projects;
- Forming a working group, via the Advisory Council, to develop options for addressing the issue;
- Addressing the issue through existing CINMS programs (*e.g.*, education, outreach, research, or monitoring) and action plans; and/or
- Developing a new action plan.

**Table 3. List of All Strategies Within the Nine Action Plans**

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